

make sure that people understand their choices, are able to articulate what they and their families want, and that their health care wishes, whatever they may be, are respected.

This bipartisan concept got caught up in the madness of the 2009 political lie of the year—death panels—but it's now time to revisit it. It's overwhelmingly supported by the American people, including the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street. It costs nothing, and will help enhance the well-being of our families.

There is a golden opportunity to come together around a collective vision of rebuilding and renewing America. This is happening at the State and local levels as people are uniting around their visions and putting up money to achieve it. This is the fastest way to revitalize the economy and protect our quality of life, and the Federal Government should be playing.

While I strongly support efforts to correct the distorting and, in some ways, corruption of the political process by avalanches of secret money that are now savaging Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination, there is another corrupting process that is taking place for which there are no constitutional barriers to remediate—the legislative redistricting process. In most States, it's a scandal where politicians pick the voters rather than voters being able to pick the politicians. We all ought to identify with reform efforts that are emerging in this area.

These are five simple steps that don't cost money and certainly, in the long run, will save money while they enhance the integrity of the system. They can strengthen the economy while revitalizing the political process and addressing the frustrations of both Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party.

#### NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE IN TENNESSEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it's great to be back down on the floor, back to being in Washington, DC, to continue with what I spent most of my time last year doing, which was addressing the high-level nuclear waste issues in this country.

Today, we go to the great State of Tennessee, and identify a location where there is presently high-level nuclear waste stored and compare that to the site that was picked and that is in Federal law right now, which is the high-level nuclear waste depository scheduled to occur in Yucca Mountain.

First of all, this is Sequoyah in Tennessee, where there are over 1,094 MTU of spent nuclear fuel onsite. At Yucca Mountain, which is in the desert in Nevada, there is currently no nuclear waste onsite. At Sequoyah, the waste is stored above the ground in pools and dry casks. If we were to put it in Yucca

Mountain, where it is supposed to go, the waste would be stored 1,000 feet underground—underneath, in essence, a mountain. At Sequoyah, the waste is 25 feet from the groundwater table. At Yucca Mountain, it would be 1,000 feet above the water table, and Yucca Mountain is 100 miles from the Colorado River. Sequoyah is 14 miles from the city of Chattanooga and 14 miles from Chickamauga Lake.

So why do I highlight these issues? Because of what happened in Japan with Fukushima Daiichi and the high-level nuclear waste.

A lot of the nuclear exposure was because pools had dried up. The nuclear waste heated up, and then you had almost a worldwide catastrophe right next to the ocean. If we were doing what was public policy in Federal law in collecting our high-level nuclear waste and taking it to a desert underneath a mountain, that would be a much more secure location than around our major municipalities, our streams, and our groundwater locations. But, no, because of this administration and some political promises made in the last election cycle, they have defunded and pulled off the table Yucca Mountain from consideration.

In 1982, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act made the Federal Government responsible for checking waste. Since that time, \$9 billion and 20 years was spent studying for a suitable location. That study ended in Yucca Mountain.

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In 1987 Congress named Yucca Mountain the sole candidate site for a permanent repository, and then in '94 DOE published scientific results demonstrating Yucca as capable of protecting public health and safety; in '98, the statutory deadline for DOE to commence disposal of spent nuclear fuel.

So we pay these nuclear utilities money to hold their own waste that we should be collecting based upon Federal law.

In 2002 we voted here, and the President and Congress approved Yucca as the site repository. DOE issued a license application in 2008, and then in 2009 President Obama announced plans to terminate Yucca Mountain after \$15 billion spent in studying this site.

And I'll close with this: Would you rather have nuclear waste 14 miles from a major metropolitan area next to a lake or would you rather have high-level nuclear waste hundreds of miles from the major, largest city, 100 miles from a river, underneath a mountain, in the desert?

Public policy, good public policy demands that we move forward on Yucca Mountain.

#### CONGRATULATING UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA ON 2011 BCS CHAMPIONSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the University of Alabama Crimson Tide for being the 2011 BCS champions. Roll Tide.

The State of Alabama is still number one in college football. For the past 3 consecutive years, a team from the State of Alabama has won the national championship trophy. The University of Alabama has been the national champs twice in the last 3 years.

The championship game between Alabama and LSU represents college football at its finest. Both schools have a proud and very rich tradition in football history, and the LSU Tigers should be commended for an outstanding season. While both teams deserve recognition, in the end, Alabama beat LSU with a final score of 21–0.

I want to congratulate the coaches, staff, team, and the entire university family and fans for an amazing season. It was your hard work, persistence, leadership, and commitment all season long that made this decisive victory become a reality.

The University of Alabama has had a long-standing tradition of excellence in collegiate football. This year's victory represented the 14th national championship title for the University of Alabama. Since being founded in 1892, the Crimson Tide football program has achieved 813 victories in the NCAA Division I and 26 conference championships. The Crimson Tide also sets an NCAA record with 58 post-season bowl appearances. The Tide leads the SEC West Division with seven division titles and seven appearances in the SEC Championship Game.

This entire team deserves recognition and honor. I want to especially acknowledge Trent Richardson, who was a Heisman Trophy finalist and winner of this year's Nation's Most Outstanding Running Back. I would also like to acknowledge Barrett Jones, who was the 2011 Outland Trophy winner for the Nation's best interior lineman in college football.

This championship team also includes six players who were selected for the 2011 Associated Press All-America Team: Mark Barron, Dont'a Hightower, Barrett Jones, Trent Richardson, Courtney Upshaw, and Dre Kirkpatrick. This year's team was truly a force to be reckoned with.

This win not only represents a victory for the University of Alabama football team, but it also is a unifying victory for the State of Alabama, who suffered so much during the devastation of the April tornados. This victory shows the resilient spirit of Alabamians and reflects our hope for a better future.

I speak on behalf of the constituents of the Seventh Congressional District, the great State of Alabama, and this Nation as I express how proud we are of the players, coaches, and athletic staff of the University of Alabama for making this victory possible and helping our communities heal.

I also want to thank Representative CASSIDY of Louisiana for being such a